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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused June 4 news coverage on the potential appointment of former Minister of Finance Wang Chien-shien as the new Control Yuan President; the personnel reshuffle at China's Taiwan Affairs Office and Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait; on the damage caused by recent heavy rains to Taiwan's agriculture; and on the chaotic situation the South Korean government is facing now. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" questioned President Ma Ying-jeou's political credibility and said Ma's way of dealing with China will only allow Beijing to nibble away at and erode Taiwan's sovereignty. A separate "Liberty Times" column also slammed KMT Chairman Wu Poh-hsiung's, saying that Wu's personal feeling that China is unlikely to fire missiles at Taiwan is a move of self disparagement and disarmament. An op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," likewise, expressed concern that the Ma administration's approach in handling cross-strait relations will put Taiwan's sovereignty and democracy in grave danger. End summary.

A) "Something Wrong with President Ma's Political Credibility"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (6/4):

"... It is imaginable that Ma and his new administration's way of dealing with China will result in the latter's easily nibbling away at Taiwan's sovereignty, something that China has not been able to do during the past eight years.

"Within a mere two weeks, President Ma and his new administration have granted China access to the bargaining chip of Taiwan's sovereignty, for which Beijing has been yearning earnestly but not been able to obtain during the past eight years. In this vein, Taiwan will likely fall into the dangerous situation of having its sovereignty hollowed out over the next four years. Moreover, [KMT Chairman] Wu Poh-hsiung's 'feeling' that Beijing is unlikely to fire missiles at Taiwan - an anxious move to rationalize China's deployment of missiles aimed at Taiwan - will only make China further bent on its strategy to 'use force to facilitate unification [with Taiwan].' We are really worried that four years from now, the number (1,400) of China's missiles targeting Taiwan will not only diminish but will very likely increase! ... It is not a matter of Wu's personal 'feeling' whether or not China will remove its missiles aimed at Taiwan, but an issue concerning President Ma's political credibility. We believe this is not only a touchstone to test whether Ma adheres to his pledge but also one to test whether he is determined to 'safeguard his country.' ..."

B) "A Synonym for Capitulationism"

The "Free Talks" column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] wrote (6/4):

"... Over the past eight years under the DPP's governance, China has

used every way it can to suppress and intimidate Taiwan, but it never dared to fire missiles at Taiwan. This was because externally, there was an international restriction [imposed] by countries like the United States while domestically, China was facing internal in-fighting. Yet Wu himself regarded his 'feeling' that China will not fire missiles as a goodwill gesture and a favor [for Taiwan]. This is in reality a move of self disparagement and disarmament! ...

"Turning cross-Strait [relations] into a domestic issue and turning Taiwan into another Hong Kong are strategies to which China continues to adhere, and this remains unchanged even after Ma has  
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